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United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/162, provides an overview of the training activities and regional consultations carried out by the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre during its three years of operation. The report presents the achievements of the Centre in the context of the growing demand for its services, generated by the developments in the Middle East and North Africa, and the necessity of adequate resources being allocated to enable the Centre to discharge its mandate fully and effectively. Finally, the report provides an analysis of the challenges and future opportunities of the Centre and a specification of the resources required to realize such opportunities in accordance with the established training and documentation mandate.

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region operates under the supervision of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It was established by the General Assembly through resolution 60/153 of 2005 and is mandated "...to undertake training and documentation activities according to international human rights standards and to support such efforts within the region by Governments, United Nations agencies and programmes, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations". The main objective of the Centre is to strengthen human rights knowledge and skills within its region of operation.

2. The Centre is currently funded exclusively through extrabudgetary resources. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 67/162, the Assembly requested: "... the Secretary-General to provide funds and human resources from the regular budget of the United Nations, beginning in the biennium 2014-2015, to enable the Centre to respond positively and effectively to the growing needs in South-West Asia and the Arab region, to fulfil its mandate ...". In paragraph 6 it requested the submission of the present report on the implementation of the resolution.

3. The geographical mandate of the Centre covers 25 countries,[1] the majority of which are situated in the Arab region and three are situated in South-West Asia. The Centre thus covers countries falling under three geographical units of OHCHR (Africa, Middle East and North Africa, and the Asia Pacific region). Within its specific training and documentation mandate, the Centre works in close coordination with regional representatives in the field, heads of country offices, human rights units of peace missions and coordinators of regional units at OHCHR headquarters. The unique mandate of the Centre complements the broader mandates of existing OHCHR field presences through the development and provision of training and documentation adapted to the linguistic and capacity-building needs of these contexts.

4. The Centre is currently staffed by two international professionals and two national general service staff. Following the official inauguration of the Centre in May 2009, it commenced its regular activities in late 2010. During the first three years of its operation, demand for the services of the Centre has grown, while the level of resources available to the Centre has not grown proportionately. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in her report to the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, drew attention to the resource gap and concluded that "... it has become clear that it [the Centre] will not be able to discharge its mandate effectively without the allocation of adequate resources on an ongoing basis from the regular budget of the United Nations."[2]

5. The Centre has conducted important work under its mandate on issues including United Nations human rights mechanisms, human trafficking, the media and human rights education. However, with adequate and sustained resources, its

[1] Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and State of Palestine.

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 36* (A/67/36), para. 71.

achievements to date could be further developed and its activities could be expanded to cover more human rights issues and reach more beneficiaries in all the countries covered by the Centre.

II. Functions of the Centre

6. The host country agreement, signed in 2008 between OHCHR and Qatar, refers in article IV to General Assembly resolution 60/153 in noting that the Centre will contribute to "... the continuing cooperation and assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the further strengthening of the existing regional arrangements and regional machineries for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular through technical cooperation which is aimed at national capacity-building, public information and education, with a view to exchanging information and experience in the field of human rights". Accordingly, article V of the host country agreement further elaborates on the functions of the Centre and includes the following:

(a) Provide training and expertise on reporting procedures to treaty bodies, disseminate human rights information, legislative reviews, train law enforcement officials, assist in preparing user-friendly manuals and tools and train the trainers, government officials, relevant professional groups and other stakeholders;

(b) Develop information and documentation systems on human rights;

(c) Work with national human rights institutions;

(d) Work with civil society organizations;

(e) Raise public awareness of human rights;

(f) Execute training and documentation-related activities with regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations; these may include the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Union of Maghreb States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation;

(g) Deliver training to the United Nations staff working at the country and regional levels;

(h) Advise States and non-governmental entities on human rights education programmes and appropriate professional training programmes.

III. Human rights training and documentation within the region

A. Impact of transitions in the Arab region

7. The Centre became operational two months prior to the emergence of the events commonly referred to as the Arab Spring. These developments reaffirmed the need for strengthening the training and documentation capacity in the region. In general, strengthening human rights knowledge within a vast area of operation is a long-term process that requires sustained resources and expertise. However, the following particular demands that have arisen, or increased in volume, during this period of time have had the effect of further underlining the need for human and

financial resources commensurate with the Centre's geographical coverage, and training and documentation mandate:

(a) Heightened expectations that the Centre will fill the void relating to the paucity of Arabic language training materials, programmes and expertise;

(b) Increased demand for various types of human rights documentation;

(c) Need for further work to support the development of human rights culture and education across the region.

8. In fulfilling its training and documentation mandate to meet the regional needs, it is envisaged that the Centre will eventually make use of a number of working languages, including but not limited to Arabic, Farsi, and English. In order to reach the greatest number of beneficiaries of the Centre's activities, the Centre has so far prioritized the use of Arabic in its training and documentation materials. Thus an Arabic language website for the Centre has been established that, in addition to carrying news about the Centre and its activities, features individual country pages for all 25 States covered by the Centre containing essential United Nations human rights documentation.[3] Furthermore, the Centre has published a regular newsletter, in Arabic and English, that is made available in paper print and digitally through the website. Work is ongoing for the website to provide searchable human rights training and reference materials.

9. Training and documentation activities are part of a strategy to foster respect for human rights and to strengthen emerging democracies. While the Centre continues to face challenges, at the same time, opportunities have been created to strengthen human rights knowledge and skills within its region of operation. The Centre operates on the basis of cooperation with Member States that request assistance. The transitions in the Arab region have led to increased openness for engagement with OHCHR, including through requests for technical cooperation and support.

B. Engagement of stakeholders in the work of the Centre

10. In respect to targeted support to human rights protection, the Centre plays a particularly important capacity-building role for a number of actors in government, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations, and diplomacy. The table below reflects participation by these actors in activities conducted by the Centre, the number of countries in which the Centre's events have been located and the range of nationalities that have participated in key trainings and consultations. In addition, the Centre has engaged with regional organizations, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council, and has contributed to the mainstreaming of human rights promotion and protection in the work of other United Nations entities. As an example, in May 2012, in Qatar, the Centre organized a gender training for OHCHR heads of field presences.

11. The number of participants at the events ranges from four participants at a capacity-building training in 2012 for the heads of the Omani Human Rights Committee, to approximately 150 civil society attendees at a symposium on press freedom held in Yemen in 2013. In 2011, a total of approximately 275 participants

[3] http://www.undohacentre.ohchr.org.

benefitted from key activities of the Centre. In 2012, the number was 380 and, up until June 2013, the Centre estimated having had 300 participants at its key trainings and consultations.

Table
Geographical representation at trainings and consultations conducted by the Centre

	Number of times key consultations and trainings were located in the country*			*Number of times countries/nationalities** were represented at key consultations and trainings*		
	2011	*2012*	*2013****	*2011*	*2012*	*2013****
Afghanistan						
Algeria						2
Bahrain				3	4	2
Comoros						
Djibouti					1	1
Egypt				3	4	4
Iran (Islamic Republic of)						
Iraq				1	3	2
Jordan		2		3	3	3
Kuwait			1	3	4	2
Lebanon	2			4	3	
Libya		1			1	2
Mauritania				1	2	2
Morocco				1	1	
Oman	1			4	5	2
Palestine				3	3	4
Pakistan						
Qatar	3	6	2	6	7	3
Saudi Arabia				3	4	3
Somalia					1	1
Sudan	1			3	4	3
Syria						
Tunisia		1		1	5	2
United Arab Emirates	1	2		3	4	2
Yemen			3	1	2	5
Total	**8**	**12**	**6**	**44**	**61**	**45**

(Footnotes on following page)

(Footnotes to Table)

* These are key trainings and consultations, and should not be taken as an exhaustive representation of activities.

** Participants include, but are not limited to, government officials, diplomats, law enforcement officials and representatives of NHRIs and civil society, including journalists. In addition, the table does not reflect the representation of regional organizations, such as the GCC, at some of these events.

*** Key trainings and consultations implemented as at June 2013.

12. In response to a request for input to the present report,[4] the Syrian Arab Republic provided a number of observations. It considers that the Centre has not been sufficiently active in the region to justify further allocation of resources, and that it has been used for the political purposes of the host country. As illustrated in the table, a number of events are held at the Centre's seat of operations in the host country of Qatar. Irrespective of its location, it remains a United Nations Regional Training Centre, reporting to OHCHR. As the table illustrates, many key consultations and trainings have been carried out in other countries, and, significantly, the vast majority of nationalities have on several occasions participated in trainings and events. The Syrian Arab Republic stressed that it is relevant to reiterate that the mandate of the Centre is solely to conduct human rights training and documentation. It is expressly reflected in article IV of the host country agreement that all activities of the Centre be aimed at fulfilling its mandate and achieving its objectives, and that it is guided by the principles of the United Nations, including impartiality, independence, objectivity and transparency.

13. In response to a request for input to the present report, Qatar pointed to the continued relevance of the Centre activities and reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the activities of the Centre. Qatar also considered the establishment of the Centre to be an important vehicle for strengthening international cooperation in the field of human rights capacity-building and awareness raising. Qatar indicated that it has benefited from the activities of the Centre, including those organized in Qatar, such as the training of the Qatari police on human rights and the study visits conducted by high schools to the Centre. According to Qatar, the sustainability of the Centre and its ability to fully discharge its mandate will depend on strengthening it with adequate staffing and a permanent operational budget that will allow it to continue to function independently and credibly. Qatar believes this can be done only through the inclusion of the Centre's financing in the regular budget of the United Nations, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/162.

14. In general, there is high demand for medium to advanced level human rights training in the region covered by the Centre. The perceived benefit of such training may be demonstrated by the fact that some Member States have elected to partially cover certain expenditures relating to activities implemented in their countries. Member States have consistently requested training in the following areas:

(a) Reporting to the United Nations treaty bodies and the universal periodic review;

[4] A request for input dated 13 June 2013 on engagement with the Centre was sent to the 25 countries covered by the Centre.

(b) Basic and advanced human rights trainings for diplomats, journalists, law enforcement officials and (mostly newly created) NHRIs;

(c) Human rights-based approach to combating human trafficking.

15. The Centre has increased its close cooperation with other OHCHR presences in the region, including in Yemen, Libya and Tunisia, with regard to training and documentation activities. The Centre's operation to date has produced a number of results, including:

(a) Strong relations forged with ministries of foreign affairs and NHRIs in the region;

(b) Requests received for country-based training;

(c) Development of a solid network of former participants who can be invited by the Centre to take part in future activities;

(d) Requests received for collaboration with United Nations country teams and other United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

These are expected to benefit the Centre's future ability to effectively strengthen human rights knowledge and skills through implementation of its activities.

IV. Review of three years of operation

A. Overview of activities 2011-2013

16. The strategic priorities of the Centre are set within the overall thematic priorities of OHCHR. Thus the six thematic priorities that have informed the Centre's work are: countering discrimination; combating impunity and strengthening the rule of law and democratic society; pursuing economic, social and cultural rights and combating poverty; protecting human rights in the context of migration; protecting human rights in the context of violence and insecurity; and strengthening international human rights mechanisms.

17. In the context of the United Nations human rights programme,[5] under the leadership of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, subprogramme 3, on advisory services, technical cooperation and field activities, provides the following objective: "To advance the promotion and protection of the effective enjoyment by all of all human rights through enhanced capacity-building, including through assistance to requesting States...". Of the expected accomplishments of the Secretariat in this respect, item (d) may be highlighted as being particularly relevant to the mandate of the Centre: "Enhanced support of OHCHR to human rights education and awareness-raising, including at the national level, at the request of States."

18. In September 2010, in Qatar, a workshop on the future vision of the Centre, with more than 60 regional experts and representatives of governments, CSOs and NHRIs, was held for the purpose of determining the principal needs of the region

[5] See A/67/461.

for human rights capacity-building. The workshop identified key areas for intervention and its discussions provided much of the foundation for the development of the Centre's strategic priorities in terms of activities within the parameters of its established training and documentation mandate. The Centre's key training programmes are thus informed by the vision for the Centre discussed at the workshop.

19. Since its establishment and following the regional expert workshop, the Centre has been piloting regional programmes, some of which have also been adapted and implemented at the country level. The Centre's key training programmes cover:

(a) Human rights and diplomacy;

(b) Human trafficking;

(c) National human rights institutions;

(d) Human rights and media;

(e) Human rights education;

(f) Police training on human rights;

(g) Other regional human rights consultations.

20. In summary, the key training programmes were developed with reference to OHCHR thematic priorities and the vision for the Centre discussed at the workshop in 2010. The functions of the Centre, under its mandate, include the development of information and documentation systems on human rights, capacity-building and raising awareness on human rights. Related to this is the support and advice provided to States and non-governmental entities in relation to human rights education programmes. Strengthening the capacity of Arab diplomats to interact with international human rights mechanisms was identified as a key area during the regional expert workshop. The participants further identified trafficking in persons as one of the pressing human rights issues in the region. The mandate of the Centre expressly provides for working with NHRIs and the importance of this was also stressed at the workshop. In the implementation of its activities the Centre promotes and utilizes the human rights-based approach, which has been a prominent part of its work in the context of human rights and media. Finally, there has been a particularly notable increase in the demand for training of law enforcement officials following developments in the Middle East and North Africa. In conducting its activities, the Centre seeks to ensure gender balance among participants and trainers and has found that this approach contributes to the success of its trainings and events.

1. Human rights and diplomacy

21. The regional training on human rights and diplomacy is a flagship activity of the Centre. On 19 April 2012, the Centre organized a validation meeting on the proposed training programme, which gathered a number of heads of human rights departments of ministries of foreign affairs from the Arab region. The meeting paved the way for further consultations with target groups and contributed to the design of a training programme tailored to existing needs. From 23 to 27 December 2012, in Jordan, 21 junior to medium level diplomats participated in the first Regional Annual Training of Arab Diplomats on Human Rights. This initial regional training focused on the use of the United Nations human rights mechanisms and

protection system and was positively received by participants. Following the training, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the State of Palestine made requests for similar trainings to be carried out at the country level. On 25 March 2013, an evaluation meeting on the first regional training programme was held in Doha, where participants of the training gave constructive recommendations for further enhancing the effectiveness of the training, including through a stronger focus on case studies, increased use of new technologies and more exchanges of experiences with senior human rights diplomats.

22. The second regional training was organized in Kuwait, from 9 to 13 June 2013, in collaboration with the Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While maintaining the focus on the United Nations human rights mechanisms and protection system, it integrated the experiences and recommendations from the first regional annual training. Thus, the Centre utilized the United Nations webcast of the universal periodic review consideration of the United Arab Emirates, in order to take participants through a real case study. It was attended by 23 participants, in addition to two senior Arab diplomats who shared their experiences on human rights and diplomacy.

23. The Centre has institutionalized regional training on treaty bodies, special procedures and the universal periodic review. This has led to an increased understanding of human rights mechanisms, including the new modalities of the Human Rights Council and of ways to improve engagement in the second cycle of the universal periodic review. In particular, participants developed a checklist of issues to be addressed prior to the universal periodic review, which they expressed was a useful tool to facilitate their engagement with that mechanism.

24. The positive reception of this training at the regional level has led several countries to request similar trainings at the country level. Thus, following a request, the Centre organized training for 25 Yemeni diplomats in Yemen, which was held from 11 to 14 May 2013.

25. As a result of these trainings, a number of Arab diplomats are better equipped to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights through their work. In Yemen, this has led to changes in the basic and deployment training modules on consular work to reflect a focus on the protection of citizens' rights abroad. The Centre also established a network of the Arab diplomats who participated in its trainings.

2. Human trafficking

26. The Centre, as part of OHCHR, is committed to the human rights-based approach to combating trafficking in persons. The same commitment is echoed by the League of Arab States in the form of the Arab Initiative to Combat Human Trafficking, which was adopted in 2010. An agreement to integrate a human rights-based approach into the Arab Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking was a significant outcome of a regional consultation held on the human rights-based approach to combating human trafficking. This event was organized by the Centre, in collaboration with the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking; it was held on 17 and 18 May 2011, and was attended by 70 participants from a variety of countries. The Arab Initiative to Combat Human Trafficking represents a formal initiative to strengthen the regional implementation of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women

and Children (the Palermo Protocol). The Initiative was amended to include explicit references to the OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking. It also refers to OHCHR as an important partner in the fight against trafficking.

27. In December 2011, in collaboration with the Human Rights Department of the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Centre organized the first regional training based on the OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking. The training was attended by law enforcement officials and members of national entities for combating human trafficking from 10 countries in the Arab region. On 5 and 6 June 2012, the Centre organized its second regional training workshop on a human rights-based approach to combating human trafficking in Jordan. The training, which focused on victims' rights, was attended by 26 participants from 18 countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

28. On 16 September 2012, the Centre was invited to participate, as an observer, in discussions relating to the adoption of a national strategy for combating human trafficking in Qatar. The Centre has since attended two additional meetings and given oral feedback on the strategy based on the OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking.

29. From 26 to 28 November 2012, the Centre and the OHCHR country office in Tunisia, in collaboration with the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Interior of Tunisia, organized a national event on human trafficking in Tunis. The first day consisted of a public symposium aimed at identifying the characteristics of trafficking in Tunisia. The following days were devoted to a training programme focused on skills-building in dealing with trafficking cases and on the development of a national plan of action to combat human trafficking. In that context, the sharing of experiences of the United Arab Emirates and Jordan in combating human trafficking was found useful by participants. The Centre's activity in Tunisia triggered a commitment to accelerate the adoption of the new national law on combating human trafficking.

3. National human rights institutions

30. In the region covered by the Centre there are nine NHRIs. Seven comply fully with the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (Paris Principles)[6] and have been granted "A" status accreditation by the International Coordinating Committee for National Human Rights Institutions. These include Afghanistan, Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Qatar and the State of Palestine. Two NHRIs, in Tunisia and Algeria, have received "B" status accreditation.[7] In addition, the Centre works with institutions and commissions that aspire to comply with the Paris Principles.

[6] See resolution 48/134, annex.

[7] International Coordinating Committee for National Human Rights Institutions accreditation status as at 19 July 2013; levels of accreditation by the Committee: "A" Voting member: complies fully with the Paris Principles; "B" Observer member: does not fully comply with the Paris Principles or has not yet submitted sufficient documentation to make that determination; "C" Non-member: does not comply with the Paris Principles.

31. In May 2011, the Centre undertook a mission to Oman for the purpose of assessing the capacity of new staff of the Omani National Human Rights Commission to carry out their tasks. The Centre subsequently developed a joint cooperation programme with the Commission to enhance the capacity of its staff and commissioners. Within this framework, the Centre organized a workshop in December 2011, aimed at introducing the new staff members of the Commission to the basic principles of human rights, the United Nations international protection system, the work of NHRIs and the Paris Principles. On 6 and 7 February 2012, the Centre organized a training workshop for four coordinators from the Omani National Human Rights Commission to enhance organization and planning methods within the Commission.

32. In close cooperation with the Qatari National Human Rights Committee, the Centre organized a training session on 20 and 21 May 2012 for the new members of the Committee and some of its staff. The training focused on strengthening the 17 participants' understanding of key human rights standards and principles, such as the international human rights system and the Paris Principles. Practical issues relating to the implementation of the international obligations of Qatar were also examined.

33. On 31 March and 1 April 2013, in cooperation with the Qatari National Human Rights Committee and the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions, the Centre organized a training workshop on the role of national institutions in the international mechanisms for the protection of human rights under the universal periodic review and treaty bodies. The workshop was attended by participants from 13 Arab countries and focused on the application of the Paris Principles, the role of international human rights mechanisms in relation with the work of the NHRIs, and enhancing knowledge of the international human rights mechanisms and of the universal periodic review recommendations. Participants emphasized the importance of regular trainings in areas such as report writing and complaint handling.

4. Human rights and media

34. A regional training programme for journalists was developed in cooperation with prominent media outlets such as Aljazeera and regional and international organizations, including UNESCO. The Centre implemented three such training programmes, in Lebanon (2011), Libya (2012) and Yemen (2013).

35. The first training programme took place in Lebanon on 4 and 5 May 2011, and targeted both international correspondents from Aljazeera and local journalists, who represented different newspapers and television channels. The event, which was attended by 25 journalists, was linked to the 3 May International Media Day and focused on the right to freedom of expression. Participants were introduced to the general notions relating to the human rights-based approach and were trained on how to reflect its practical implication in their work. As a result, several journalists from Aljazeera developed media reports using the human rights-based approach.

36. The second training programme was organized from 3 to 7 May 2012, in Libya. The 47 participants included journalists and representatives of civil society organizations, who were trained on human rights issues, including transitional justice and economic, cultural and social rights.

37. From 6 to 9 May 2013, the third training programme on human rights and media was organized in Yemen and was attended by 30 participants. In addition to the elements covered in the first training using the human rights-based approach, this training also focused on issues of particular relevance to Yemen, such as transitional justice and the right to access to information.

5. Human rights education

38. On 29 and 30 January 2012, in partnership with the Institute for the Development of Civil Society, a Sudanese non-governmental organization, the Centre held an event designed to discuss efforts in Arab countries to integrate human rights education into higher education, in accordance with the Plan of Action for the second phase (2010-2014) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.[8] Participants discussed the current situation of human rights education in the region, and exchanged information on their experiences in developing relevant programmes. This activity led to the creation of an informal network of national coordinators for the implementation of the Plan of Action and the Human Rights Education Strategy of the League of Arab States.

39. On 21 to 22 December 2011, in Lebanon, the Centre organized the Regional Consultation on the Development of University Graduate Programmes on human rights. The consultation was attended by academics from the Arab region and representatives of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. Discussions focused on three themes: best practices in relation to the development of post-graduate human rights degrees and programmes; how to benefit from existing practices within the region; and how to create regular forums for coordination and experience and expertise sharing.

40. The participants also identified a number of key lessons learned. In particular, it was noted that the development of higher education human rights academic programmes requires a considerable amount of material and human resources; that continuous exchange of expertise (especially advanced expertise) is needed for the development of such programmes; and that there is a need to deal with a number of complex stages relating to the development of both graduate and post-graduate human rights programmes; for example, curriculum development, the development of basic human rights texts in the Arabic language, the acquisition of adequate library resources and advanced training of teachers and lecturers. The capacity of the Centre will need to be considerably increased to support the various activities needed for the development of human rights specialization at the university level.

41. In addition, the Centre conducted two workshops in 2012 for high school students in Qatar, where participants were introduced to concepts of human rights within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[9] and other international conventions, and were encouraged to develop a code of conduct within their schools reflecting the values of respect, acceptance, tolerance and collaboration. In 2013, the Centre, in partnership with Education Above All, a policy research and advocacy organization, initiated a separate project on the protection of the right to education during insecurity and armed conflict in the Middle East and North Africa region.

[8] See A/HRC/15/28.

[9] Resolution 217 A (III).

6. Police training on human rights

42. The first activities of the Centre on police training were conducted at country level, in Qatar. This approach was taken in recognition of the labour intensity of police training programmes. From 9 to 13 December 2012, in cooperation with the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of the Interior of Qatar, the Centre organized a training programme for mid-ranking members of the national police on human rights issues relating to law enforcement. The event was attended by 26 police officers from various departments of the Ministry of the Interior covering major functions such as human rights, drug prevention, nationality and travel documents, criminal evidence and information.

43. The expansion of the Centre's activities for police training encompasses developing strong regional programmes for training of trainers, including regional training for police in the GCC, which is expected to be implemented in the second half of 2013. Furthermore, subject to the availability of adequate resources, there is also scope to expand the national level training programmes to more countries.

7. Other regional human rights consultations

44. Through regional consultations with governments, NHRIs, academics, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, the Centre has provided a platform for discussions and exchange of experiences and expertise on issues including the impact of foreign debt on human rights and on the protection of the rights of minorities.

45. On 31 January and 1 February 2011, the Centre, in cooperation with the United Nations independent expert on the effects of foreign debt and human rights, organized the Asia Regional Consultation on the Draft General Guidelines on Foreign Debt and Human Rights in Qatar. The event was co-sponsored by the Government of Qatar and sought the views of various stakeholders from the public and private sectors, civil society and academia on the format and contents of the draft guidelines, with a view to improving them. Participants recommended a follow-up forum to focus on the implementation of the guidelines.[10]

46. On 19 and 20 November 2012, within the framework of the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, the OHCHR Research and Right to Development Division organized, with the support of the Centre, a consultation on the theme "Reflecting diversity in the process of constitutional reforms in the Middle East and North Africa". The consultation aimed at identifying good practices for the promotion and protection of minority rights, and at enhancing cooperation between human rights mechanisms at the international, regional and national levels, with a view to encouraging the integration of the protection of minorities into constitutions, legislation and policies. It was attended by 22 experts from various countries in the region. While noting the diversity of minority issues and situations in the region, the consultation recommended that a regular forum be established on minority rights issues. The consultation highlighted the need for awareness of the

[10] See A/HRC/20/23; in June 2012, after further consultations at the regional and international levels, the Human Rights Council endorsed in its resolution 20/10 the Guiding Principles on Foreign Debt and Human Rights, which are designed to assist States and other relevant actors in the conduct of their respective activities relating to external debt.

complexity of minority rights issues and the need to monitor developments relating to minority rights in the Arab region.

B. Analysis of achievements and opportunities for future engagement

47. Since its establishment, the Centre has managed to gain visibility and credibility within the Arab region, mainly due to three factors:

(a) Anticipation that was created as a result of the process towards establishment of the Centre, which was achieved through the support of Member States;

(b) Heightened demand for human rights training and documentation following the political changes in several countries of the Arab region;

(c) Success of a number of targeted trainings and regional consultations, as measured by the feedback from participants and the subsequent requests for further activities.

48. All of the regional training activities are carried out once a year and national level activities are carried out to the extent possible. However, more capacity would enable the Centre to expand activities to the region of South-West Asia (Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan), where no activities have as yet been carried out, and to secure more participation from least developed countries (Afghanistan, Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen).

49. As the vast majority of countries covered by the Centre are Arabic-speaking, and owing to the acute need for training and documentation in that language, it has so far focused on training and documentation in Arabic, although in the long-term it is envisaged that the Centre will also have the capacity to provide human rights documentation, and provide trainings, in other major languages of the region.

C. Challenges and resource requirements

50. In order to ensure sustainability of the Centre activities, there is a need for more investment in developing training materials and tools, in Arabic and other major languages, and making them available to governments, NHRIs and CSOs to carry out similar training activities. The development of such materials will also help the Centre to better respond to individual member States' requests, as appropriate, including through extending its support through United Nations field presences (OHCHR, United Nations country teams) to carry out similar trainings at the country level.

51. As required by General Assembly resolution 60/153, financial resources for post and non-post costs were allocated by OHCHR from extrabudgetary funds. In the present global financial situation, the availability of sufficient extrabudgetary resources to maintain all existing activities of OHCHR cannot be guaranteed, and thus there is little possibility to further strengthen the Centre's resources or even to ensure its long-term viability.

52. The Centre currently functions with two professional level staff (one P-5 and one P-3) and two General Service support staff, with an annual budget of approximately $1.1 million from extrabudgetary sources, including activity costs

and related operating expenses. In addition, Qatar, as the host country, provides the Centre with an office building, utility services and some office equipment. The regular budget resources requested would cover core staff posts, and part of the general operating costs and activities, as required for the effective performance of the mandate and sustainability of the core activities of the Centre, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/162.

53. In order to address the increased number of requests for assistance and the related workload in planning, developing and delivering training activities, a total of eight staff is needed. The staff would consist of five professional level staff members, including one P-5 Head of Office supported by one Human Rights Officer at the P-4 level and three Human Rights Officers at the P-3 level, and three general services staff. In accordance with OHCHR policy for regional offices and centres, the core structure of the Centre of one P-5, one P-4, one P-3 and one General Service staff, should be secured through regular budget funding.

54. General operating costs include communication costs, conference services, travel of representatives and staff members, external printing of documents, training fees provided for the training of staff members, contractual services, supplies, equipment, the rental of event premises, security charges, seminars and grants.

55. With the availability of adequate financial resources the Centre would have the opportunity to implement the following additional activities:

(a) The holding of two regional training sessions per year, within the strategic priorities of the Centre, for four days each in Doha or a chosen capital from the covered countries; the sessions would address 30 participants each from governments, national human rights institutions and civil society in the region;

(b) The convening of a two-day regional consultation, within the strategic priorities of the Centre, per biennium in Doha, or a chosen capital of countries covered in the region, for 30 participants including international and national experts;

(c) The development of a comprehensive documentations strategy, which would include maintenance of the Arabic website with regular updates (including costs of translation and uploads) and a digital library for best practices in the major languages of the region covered by the Centre.

56. Further, the requested resources would support the expansion of the following activities:

(a) Key regional trainings and their adaptation for use at the country level;

(b) Development and dissemination of professional and advanced human rights training materials (both paper and digital for its main training programmes) in Arabic;

(c) Use of modern technology in the delivery of future training starting with the transformation of the current skeletal website into an operational training tool (Arabic and Farsi);

(d) Development and implementation of training activities and materials targeting young human rights activists and defenders;

(e) Development of a roster of Arabic-speaking human rights experts at various levels for several purposes, including training, needs assessments and providing support to engagement with the United Nations human rights mechanisms;

(f) Development and implementation of a comprehensive programme aimed at the integration of human rights into higher education institutions in the region;

(g) Development and delivery of materials and activities within the region of South-West Asia.

V. Conclusion

57. **In the three years of its operation, the Centre has demonstrated its capacity to implement a range of training and documentation activities relevant to its objective of strengthening human rights knowledge and skills within its region of operation. The Centre has managed to gain visibility and credibility. However, human and financial resources constraints have affected its ability to respond in a timely manner to increasing requests, to provide support to all the countries covered by its mandate and to appropriately reflect the particular human rights issues and needs of the region in the continuing development of its programmes. This was recognized by Member States when the General Assembly passed resolution 67/162, requesting the Secretary-General to allocate funds from the United Nations regular budget.**

58. **It has become clear that, owing to growing demands, the Centre will be unable to effectively discharge its mandate without the allocation of adequate resources. The minimum requirements that have been identified as necessary to effectively fulfil the mandate of the Centre should be viewed in the context of the geographical coverage of the Centre and the developments in the Middle East and North Africa, which have been a driving factor behind the increased demand on the services of the Centre. The significant challenges and opportunities facing these countries at this historical point in time require strengthened human rights knowledge and skills. If adequately equipped, the Centre could continue to provide valuable training and documentation services and be able to realize its full potential to play a crucial role in the region.**